



Video Transcription
Commissioner of Education Chris Nicastro
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Hi. I'm Chris Nicastro, commissioner of education for the state of Missouri. Thanks for tuning in to this month's Top 10 by 20 UPDATE.

The Department is currently holding public hearings across the state to gather feedback and information regarding the plans for unaccredited school districts. With this feedback we will create a statewide plan for support of and, if necessary, intervention in unaccredited schools. Everyone is encouraged to review the plans and send us your feedback. These plans can be viewed on our website at www.dese.mo.gov.

After gathering feedback, the Department will have recommendations for the State Board of Education to consider at its meeting later this month. Ensuring access to quality schools is the most important task we face as a state. Finding the right solution is a moral and economic imperative. These are all our kids, and your feedback is important to the process. Please join in the conversation about their future.

The State Board approved new teacher certification requirements at its January meeting. The Department received nearly 700 comments and used this feedback when determining the new requirements. These changes, which will go into effect August 1, 2017, are an important step toward meeting our Top 10 by 20 goal of preparing, developing and supporting effective educators.

The Department worked with a number of education partners to come up with a new revised assessment plan for the 2014-15 school year. This new plan would reduce the amount of time spent on state testing while allowing for more classroom instruction. It will also reduce the Department's funding request by more than three million dollars. Under the new plan, the state would pay for one administration of the ACT for all high school juniors. It is important that we continue to raise standards to ensure that our students graduate college and career ready.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Laura Parn of Wentzville and Ragan (Reagan) Webb of Columbia for receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Both will receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. Laura and Ragan are two shining examples of the many great educators we have in Missouri. We appreciate their service to Missouri's children.

Thank you for everything you do for our kids around the state. Please continue to stay updated on our efforts to help Missouri reach the Top 10 by 20.